

Creating Sentence Variety

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Revise paragraphs to include sentences of varying length, pattern, and type

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 85
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 86–87
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 88

You will also need:

- Transparency: **Teaching Model**, “More Flavor”

Teach

1. **Creating Sentence Variety:** Tell students that good writers vary the length and type of their sentences in order to make an impression. A short sentence can pack a punch—especially if it follows a series of longer flowing sentences. Too many short, choppy sentences in a row, however, should be combined into longer sentences.

- Write the following passage on the board and have students suggest a revision with more variety in sentence structure.

EXAMPLE

I don't see the point of making your bed. You unmake to get in it. You unmake it while you sleep. It's more comfortable unmade. It's just a waste of time to make the bed. It's a waste of energy too.

- After students suggest revisions, write the following revised example on the board.

REVISED EXAMPLE

Why make your bed? Isn't it a waste of time? When you get in bed each night, you unmake it! All during your sleep, you continue tossing, turning, and trying to get comfortable. I suggest you save your energy. Just leave it unmade.

2. **Teaching Creating Sentence Variety:** Distribute the **Lesson Summary** and guide students through the **Academic Vocabulary**. Use the **Here's How** steps to introduce three main ways of creating sentence variety.

- **Openers:** Direct attention to the first “Example” on the **Lesson Summary**. Point out that using the phrase *hot and sweaty* as an opener connects two choppy and repetitive sentences. Then share with students these other possible types of sentence openers.

Opener	Examples
Adverb	<i>Suddenly</i> , the amplifier went dead.
Prepositional phrase	<i>Within minutes</i> , a stagehand found a blown fuse.

CREATING SENTENCE VARIETY, CONTINUED

Opener	Examples
Verb form (-ing)	<i>Hurrying</i> , the stagehand searched for a new fuse. <i>Replacing</i> the fuse solved the problem.
Verb form (to)	<i>To start</i> the concert, the group played its best-known hit.

- **Length and Pattern:** Explain that a balance of short and long sentences can create a pleasing rhythm. Ask students to identify the sentence patterns in the second revised “Example.” (*simple, complex, compound*)
- **Sentence Type:** Review the different sentence types. Copy a chart like the one below on the board, or have student volunteers help you fill in each space. Then, ask students to identify the sentence types in the third revised “Example.” (*question, statement, exclamation/command, command*)

Sentence Type	Definition	Example
Statement (Declarative)	Gives information	Our drama club performed <i>The Miracle Worker</i> .
Question (Interrogative)	Poses a query	Have you ever been to a play?
Command (Imperative)	Tells or requests someone to do something	Be quiet when the curtain goes up.
Exclamation (Exclamatory)	Shows a strong feeling	That line was really funny!

- 3. Guided Practice:** Display the Transparency, **Teaching Model**, “More Flavor.” Use it to help students apply the three main ways of varying sentence structure, length, and type.
- First, cover the revision, and read aloud the draft. Ask: how are the sentences similar in this passage? (*the sentences are short; all start with the subject; only statements are used*) Ask: How does lack of sentence variety affect the passage? (*Sample: It is choppy and repetitive.*)
 - Then, reveal the revision and read it aloud. Have students discuss how creating sentence variety has improved the rhythm and flow of the passage.
 - Ask volunteers to discuss, or to highlight on the transparency, any sentence openers added to avoid starting all sentences with subject-verb order.
 - Have volunteers tell or highlight which sentences in the revised passage are compound or complex sentences, created by combining short statements. (*sentences 5, 6, and 7*)

CREATING SENTENCE VARIETY, CONTINUED

- Then have volunteers name the different sentence types used in the revised passage.
(Sentence 1: question; sentence 2: statement; sentence 3: exclamation; sentence 4: statement; sentence 5: command; sentence 6: command; sentence 7: command; sentence 8: one-word command)

QUICK CHECK. Ask students to revise each numbered passage according to the instructions.

- 1. Passage:** Patti's dog barked. It licked her face.

Instructions: Begin with an *-ing* verb form of *licked*.

(Sample: *Licking Patti's face, the dog barked loudly.*)

- 2. Passage:** Patti patted the dog. The dog wagged its tail.

Instructions: Create a compound sentence.

(Sample: *Patti patted the dog, and it wagged its tail.*)

- 3. Passage:** Patti likes to pat the dog.

Instructions: Make the sentence a command.

(Sample: *Pat the dog, Patti.*)

Practice and Apply

Activities involving improving sentence variety appear on pp. 86–87.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet A

- 1. I like Mozart's symphonies, but Shamari prefers Haydn's.*
- 2. Looking out the window last night, I saw a carriage drive by on its way to the stable.*
- 3. You must improve your grades. Why don't you get friends together and form a study group?*
- 4. When I opened the door, the cat darted inside and put her paws on my knee.*
- 5. I found a fabulous new restaurant on Church Street, right behind the theater. It serves the best desserts in town!*
- 6. I rose this morning and felt happy. After playing basketball in the morning, I plan to go to the art studio. At the end of the day I will have dinner with my grandmother. It's a good life!*

Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet B

- 1. In 1971 the microprocessor was developed.*
- 2. The microprocessor is a tiny chip, but it has had a big effect on the computer industry.*
- 3. When smaller computers became possible, inventions such as video games appeared.*
- 4. Because they have realistic graphics and interesting sound effects, video games are fun.*
- 5. To win, a player must have good coordination and good reflexes. However, concentrating is a player's greatest challenge.*

CREATING SENTENCE VARIETY, CONTINUED

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should revise at least four of the six passages with answers similar to the samples.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Students should revise at least four of the five passages with answers similar to the samples.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Lesson Summary**. Focus on the examples and the passages from **Practice Worksheet A**. Then have students complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 88.

Sample Answer: Reteaching Worksheet

(1) I like small art museums better than giant ones. Do you feel the same way? (2) While it takes days to see everything in a big museum, you can tour a small one in an hour. You don't get tired out! (3) Because a small museum's collection is more focused, you can concentrate on the work of one artist or period. (4) In a giant museum, you see things from all over the place, and it's bewildering. You can't absorb or keep track of all that information. (5) Don't you see why small museums are so much nicer? They demand less but give back much more.